



# The Learning Web

Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program (CCEAP)  
2011 Annual Report

COMMUNITY & CAREER EXPLORATION & APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

## A Diversity of Young People — a Diversity of Interests

“I’m visiting two apprentices today: Jacob, who was referred by mental health clinic staff to get him involved in anything that would engage him; and Fiona, one of my home-schoolers who is apprenticing as part of her science curriculum. Jacob’s apprenticeship at the vet clinic has been going great—his mentor says that Jacob is a quick learner and great with the animals and people alike! Fiona, on the other hand is having a rough start at the bio lab. Her mentor wonders if Fiona really is happy at the lab, saying that Fiona is extremely shy and has not been actively engaged in the work. I never know what I’m going to be discovering in this program. Sometimes, the youth who seems the most at risk does really well in an apprenticeship and the youth who seems strong, has the most issues.”

The preceding comments were made during a conversation between a CCEAP staff and the Executive Director recently at The Learning Web. We are proud that our staff cannot pigeonhole young people who participate in CCEAP. Labels can limit. People often divulge their special challenges because it is required to gain needed services. Though that is necessary to access services through our Youth Outreach Program, it is not the case with our

Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program (CCEAP). This program transcends the boundaries of age, disability, socio-economics, academic skills, and family support, serving any youth in Tompkins County. **THIS YEAR, OVER 394 YOUTH TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR SERVICES, 101 APPRENTICESHIPS AND 166 EXPLORATION VISITS WERE ARRANGED AT A DIVERSE RANGE OF COMMUNITY WORK SITES.**

In reality, the CCEAP serves a small percentage of “problem-free” youth—our estimates are about 20%. Our ability to say to every mentor and every youth and every parent that we serve ANY young person in Tompkins County, conveys an attractive, positive image, without stigma; a truly blended program.

Access to opportunities and supports is often what separates youth who achieve their dreams from youth who do not. For many of the youth and parents touched by CCEAP this year, dreams were transformed into reality. Working with community adults, who generously shared their time and workplaces, the program has made a difference in the lives of many young people this year.

An interest in photography brought this group of youth together for an exploration tour of Jari Poulin Photography. Young people from both the Ithaca and Rural CCEAP Schools joined Learning Web staffers, Jorge Cuevas and Isha Tohill in a portrait that Poulin took at the end of the visit. Exploration visits not only expand a youth’s career horizons but it also expands their connection with youth throughout the county.

2011 Services	Goal	Actual
Total youth served	294	394
Total Apprenticeships	100	101
– Volunteer Status	63	63
– Stipended Status	37	38
Total Exploration Tours	119	166
– Volunteer Status	87	111
– Stipended Status	40	55
Vocational Development/life skills Workshops	54	58
Community Service Group	45	45



## OUR RESULTS IN 2011

The CCEAP Program served 394 youth;  
 276 ICSD youth and 118 Rural Schools youth.  
 101 apprenticeships with community mentors were arranged  
 166 community & career exploration activities were arranged.  
 45 participants identified community issues and took action to address the issue through community services projects.  
 58 participants learned more about themselves, about the work world and increased their interpersonal skills through vocational development/ life skills group activities.

### Program participants have achieved the following outcomes:

94 PERCENT of apprentices developed a positive relationship with an adult role model, their mentors, and increased their general employability skills.

100 PERCENT of youth participating in exploration activities or apprenticeships increased their knowledge of the specific duties, responsibilities, training and qualifications of chosen fields of interest.

94 PERCENT of apprentices improved their performance of workplace skills and successfully completed their apprenticeship: attending consistently, arriving on time at their site, cooperating with their mentor and fulfilling the goals and expectations of their Learning Agreement.

95 PERCENT of youth participating in exploration activities or apprenticeships determined whether or not the field they explored is a viable career path for them to pursue. 100% increased their familiarity with the community employment market.

90 PERCENT of group members took responsibility for positively shaping group dynamics.

90 PERCENT of group members developed a personal goal plan that linked short and long term goals.

90 PERCENT of youth in the apprenticeship program articulated an understanding of the importance and relationship of school performance to a future career and stayed in school.

“[I] got to do something different – I’ve never helped a doctor. Something that I’m passionate about!”

Apprentice

“[My son] definitely learned good work habits, understood what had to be done at work and did it.”

Parent

“[I valued] giving back to the community, offering exposure to someone who otherwise might not be able to work in the field.”

Mentor

“Adults are hard workers. Adult life is challenging.”

Apprentice



Longtime mentor and blacksmith, Durand Van Doren was joined by two of his apprentices at a craft demonstration event last summer. Both apprentices enjoyed the new skills they learned—even swinging a 5lb hammer!



## Mutual Admiration—

Being cherished by your boss is an unusual comment for any employee to hear. But this statement was directed at two 13 year old twins recently apprenticing in a school. Alissa and Ashlie Rice, stepped out into the adult world and learned that they had a lot to offer! The Rice twins impressed their mentor, Bob Fitzsimmons, who was principal of the Ithaca Schools K-5 Summer Academy where they apprenticed this past summer. Assisting teachers at the Academy, the twins served as one-on-one reading coaches with the children, assisted with recess and lunch supervision, and helped get the students to their buses at the end of the day.

The Academy was fortunate to have the girls as they both have a wide variety of interests. Alissa is interested in mathematics, law enforcement, nursing, veterinary medicine, cooking, figure skating, glassblowing, blacksmithing, and working with seniors. Ashlie is interested in baking, dancing, drawing, animals, sales, health aide, music, poetry, teacher’s aide, theater, science and technology, and computer work. They were both interested in teaching and decided to explore the field of education. It proved to be a great experience for them. Bob Fitzsimmons shared his appreciation of Alissa and Ashlie in a recent email to Jorge Cuevas, the twins’ Learning Web Apprenticeship Coordinator. Excerpts of his email follow:

*“Each of them naturally made mistakes and had to learn the challenges of not picking favorites or of being more supportive or affectionate toward some students than others. They responded well to feedback. They added energy and excitement to the student day. They committed to the students and the teachers on a heart and soul basis. They made a difference. I was thankful to get to know both of them and would be delighted to have them work for Summer Academy again.”*

Mirroring their mentor, both girls felt the apprenticeship was very successful, exceeding the goals they had set , feeling that their mentor did everything right and that he couldn’t improve on anything! They believed that the apprenticeship helped them understand what is involved in teaching and encouraged them to consider teaching in the future. They have a lot of interests though, and want to check out all the possibilities. We look forward to watching Ashlie and Alissa as they step into the world.



Jorge Cuevas, Learning Web Apprenticeship Coordinator with the Rice twins, Ashlie, left, and Alissa.

2011 Community Exploration & Apprenticeship Sites		
260 apprenticeship & exploration experiences were arranged in diverse fields. The following is a sample of the areas youth explored:		
Veterinary Medicine	Physics	Cosmetology
Dairy farming	Dog Grooming	Gerontology
Law	Sewing & Textile arts	Blacksmithing
Education	Sound production	Bee Keeping
Politics & government	Computer programming	Medicine-Family Practice
Emergency Med Technician	Film making	Auto mechanics
Food prep	Printmaking	Equine Research
Arts & Theater	Library Science	Police science
Academic research	Plant Science	Aviation
Restaurant cooking	Computer Game design	Engineering
Small engine repair	Hotel Management	Financial planning
Photography	Atmospheric Science	Construction technology

“I found out that I can do more than I expected.”  
Apprentice

“I liked it [accounting apprenticeship] because when I started, I took my first accounting class, and my teacher referred me to The Learning Web. They went hand-in-hand kind of – being in an apprenticeship and in class at the same time.”  
Apprentice

## Facing life's challenges—needing extra support

“He felt like he was something.” This comment came from a case worker whose young client just completed a stipended apprenticeship. Marty, age 14, had academic problems, mental health issues, and came from a family that was economically stressed. His parents were involved with CPS due to neglect issues with Marty. Upon meeting Marty, LW staff learned that he liked farming and had recently visited an organic farm in his home town through another youth program. He asked to apprentice at that farm and staff was able to arrange an apprenticeship there. Marty did so well at his apprenticeship that he has been hired to work a couple hours per week at the farm. His mentors are fond of Marty and offer him much needed role modeling and support. Many stipended apprentices like Marty, gain much needed confidence, self-esteem, and new skills through an apprenticeship.

Stipended (paid) apprenticeships are offered to youth who face barriers to a successful transition to adulthood. The incentive of a paycheck is key to motivating youth to commit to an apprenticeship. Stipended youth receive additional support from the apprenticeship coordinator both on an individual basis and through group vocational development workshops. Many of the young people attending the workshops are socially delayed, have truancy issues, and have a lot of trouble with follow through. The group dynamic becomes a vehicle to build social skills and work on responsibility. Group members are able to learn how to interact and friendships are formed. The apprenticeship takes on a bigger focus as the young people share their experiences and their pride in contributing to the work site. Young people feel more accountable for their apprenticeship performance because the group has an investment in each member's success. Youth support each other in their efforts to be a successful apprentice.

It is truly amazing to see what many of these young people like Marty are able to accomplish with the help of some additional guidance and skill building.

“[The apprenticeship] exceeded expectations because my apprentices were enthusiastic about learning and did work on their own without being asked.”

Mentor

“[My apprenticeship] taught me how to be more responsible. Taught me to take working hard more seriously.”

Stipended apprentice

“This is more exciting than school.”

Stipended Apprentice

## Working Together to Provide Quality Services

Sometimes it takes a team to put together a successful experience for a youth. That was certainly the case for Gina, age 16. Referred to us by her Elmira Psych Case Manager, Gina suffered from debilitating panic attacks and anxiety. She had withdrawn from school and was very isolated. She was interested in baking and LW staff tried to build on her interest by arranging an apprenticeship with a local baker. At the initial meeting, Gina broke down in tears when the mentor requested that she phone her if Gina couldn't attend. LW staff and the mentor, taken aback by Gina's reaction, handled it beautifully and in the end, Gina was looking forward to her apprenticeship. LW staff followed up with the case manager, Gina's mom, and the mentor to discuss how best to support Gina in the apprenticeship. Gina was also involved in the discussions and strategies were created to support Gina when she began feeling an attack. This team approach was the key in Gina's ability to participate in a successful apprenticeship.

From The Ithaca Youth Bureau (IYB), Joblink, the Dispositional Alternatives Program (DAP), and the Mental Health Clinic, to the Office of Children & Family Services, Cooperative Extension, Family & Children's Service, to school staff, the Bridges Program, and other county youth-serving agencies, Web staff exchange referrals, share resources, and communicate about youth with whom both agencies work. Beyond sharing referrals, we also do joint case management on the occasions when a youth is receiving services from more than one agency (this is unusual among the employment providers but is more frequent with County Social Services and Probation Depts.). Often, collaboration yields the best result for the youth.

## Program Evaluation— Improving Our Performance

We take seriously our commitment to evaluate all of our programs and services and the staff who work for our agency. Web staff and Board engage in a number of levels of evaluation and monitoring. 100 PERCENT of program outcomes indicators for youth who participated in the program were achieved this year. Beyond the numbers though, we look to our most important stakeholders: youth participants, their parents, and the mentors for feedback about our services and the performance of our staff. We gather regular feedback through the use of Program Evaluation forms. Evaluations reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the program and staff in almost all cases:

90 PERCENT of youth felt they met and 88% felt they exceeded the goals of their apprenticeships.

92 PERCENT of youth felt their apprenticeship experience influenced and 89% felt it had a strong influence on their future career plans.

75 PERCENT of youth felt they significantly increased and 20% felt it slightly increased their knowledge of the of the career field they explored.

90 PERCENT of parents felt that their child achieved what they had hoped they would gain.

96 PERCENT of parents said their child communicated that they were satisfied and 94% said that their child was very satisfied with their experience.

90 PERCENT of mentors felt that their apprentice met the goals for the apprenticeship.

90 PERCENT of mentors felt that their apprentice increased and 40% significantly increased their knowledge of the field of work.

Suggestions about how our program can be improved were few—most respondents feel the program works well. When suggestions are made they usually relate specifically to a particular mentor match. In these cases we update our mentor database to reflect the wishes of a particular mentor or feedback from a youth or parent so that staff can make more effective placements in the future. This year mentors' comments ranged from a need for some mentors to have an apprentice who was a bit older, to others wanting the stipended status youth to be able to have longer apprenticeships. Parent comments were very positive and both mentors and parents comments regarding the staff and program reflect their strong support for our program.

### Youth, mentors & parents talk about the value of Learning Web experiences:

“Encouraged me to go further in education after high school.”

— Apprentice

“Staff was great, described the program and provided information and forms to sign up, and developed an outline of goals and expectations. He attended a “show and tell” session at the end to see the girls work and completed the final evaluations with us.”

— Mentor

“I enjoyed getting to know my apprentice personally especially in regard to his goals and desires for his future and I enjoyed being able to give him advice about how to best pursue those goals.”

— Mentor

“[My daughter’s] supervisor was wonderful. I could tell she was genuinely interested in helping my daughter professionally and personally.”

— Parent

“I’m really inspired to work hard to do well so that I can get into college for childcare.”

— Apprentice

“[My son] did learn a lot. He took responsibility for letting his mentor know that he was going to be late or have to change days. He never said, “Do I have to go?,” he always wanted to go (had to remind me to take him sometimes).”

— Parent

“Staff was terrific and our son really enjoyed her. She listened to him.”

— Parent